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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - President and Prime Minister Face Hostile
Parliament

REF: A) Addis Ababa 2338
B) Nairobi 1958

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: After signing an August 26 agreement in Addis Ababa to reconcile internal political conflicts, President Yusuf and Prime Minister Hassan Hussein returned to Baidoa to brief parliament on the accord. While the two senior officials convinced their respective camps to support the Addis agreement, continued discord within the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) will challenge its implementation. On September 1, a motion of no-confidence tabled against the Prime Minister became an overwhelming vote of confidence in his government. However, another group of MPs are gaining momentum on impeachment proceedings against President Yusuf. While parliament bickers over the future of Somalia's two highest-ranking leaders, others like Mogadishu Mayor Mohammed Dheere have publicly welcomed the Addis agreement, stating that he is looking forward to upcoming elections in Mogadishu and the Banadir region. END SUMMARY.

Support for the Addis Agreement

¶2. (SBU) On August 27, President Yusuf, Prime Minister Hassan Hussein and Speaker of Parliament Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur, arrived in Baidoa to brief parliament on the agreement they signed in Addis Ababa (Ref A). President Yusuf addressed his supporters at the presidential building, while PM Hussein addressed the MPs, sharing his views at a local hotel. Our contacts told us that separately, each camp agreed to support the Addis agreement.

¶3. (SBU) Mohamed Dheere, Mayor of Mogadishu and Banadir Governor also publicly supported the agreement. In an August 27 interview, Dheere said he welcomes whatever Somalia's leaders agree upon. Dheere said he is pleased that Banadir residents finally have been given the opportunity to elect their own administration. He declared his intent to run in the upcoming elections but argued that he still remains in office until another leader is elected to replace him. Dheere stated that no one can order another out of office without due process, adding that he is happy his detractors failed in their unceremonious bid to remove him.

Parliament Jeers TFG Leaders

¶4. (U) Although MPs initially signaled President Yusuf and Prime Minister Hussein they supported the agreement, when the two leaders appeared before parliament on August 28 they faced a hostile crowd. There was immediately an effort by some MPs to debate the

no-confidence measure that has been brewing over the last couple of weeks against the PM (Ref B). Another group asked to hear the President and PM explain the Addis agreement. The speaker put the issue to a vote -- 131 MPs voted to hear a discussion of the Addis agreement, 98 voted to debate the no-confidence vote.

¶5. (U) The Prime Minister began by reading the agreement and apologizing for his government's shortcomings. He promised improvements in security and financial management, two areas over which parliament had pilloried him. He praised President Yusuf. There was some heckling and booing among the MPs, but they cheered when the Prime Minister announced the addition of five ministers and warned that the international community would punish Djibouti agreement spoilers. Nonetheless, during PM Hussein's presentation, the Speaker implored the MPs on two separate occasions to listen to him.

¶6. (SBU) When President Yusuf appeared before parliament, he was met with such a chorus of boos that he threatened to leave. After the Speaker restored order, the President spoke, praising Prime Minister Hussein and the Addis agreement. Yusuf expressed certainty that supporters of stability, peace, unity, nationhood and elections for Somalia will back the signed agreement. MPs jeered when Yusuf said he'd been a man of war for 40 years, but was now committed to peace in Somalia.

¶7. (SBU) At one point in the speech, Yusuf may have shown a glimpse of the strain he's been under. He intended to say he was doing all he could for Somalia, but said Puntland instead. Of course, he immediately corrected himself, but MPs ridiculed him. In a pointed response, Yusuf repeated his earlier threat that all who did not listen "will hear from me." Yusuf singled out one MP, shouting, "Shut up ...there is no one here weaker than you! Keep quiet!" (Comment: Yusuf is 73 years old. There's no doubt he's been under

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considerable stress, especially in the last several weeks, and it's shown in his reportedly irascible dealings with the Ethiopians, Embassy Addis, and in his misstatement and outburst before parliament. End Comment.)

Parliament Debates No-Confidence Vote Against PM

¶8. (SBU) On August 25, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Dalha revived MPs' efforts to force out Prime Minister Hussein by circulating a 12 page diatribe of complaints against the PM. To frustrate this latest effort, when he returned from Addis, Speaker Nur refused to formally reconvene the legislators. Instead, Nur called conferences and committee meetings where he reportedly chided the MPs for wasting their time on bringing down the government even in the wake of the Addis agreement. The Speaker also told MPs that the international community was furious with their no-confidence fixation and, urged on by SRSg Ahmedou Ould-Abdullah, was considering suspending MPs' salaries (Note: Several donors, most notably the EU, are supporting MPs with monthly stipends of \$1,200. End Note.) The Speaker's delays and threats apparently eroded support for the no-confidence measure.

Prime Minister Safe, President Vulnerable

¶9. (SBU) Sensing momentum had swung in the Prime Minister's favor, on September 1 the Speaker reconvened parliament and called not for a no-confidence vote, but for a resolution commending the Prime Minister. MPs told us that the "confidence motion" passed overwhelmingly, 191 votes to 7 (with five abstentions). While this vote for the moment ends parliament's recent moves against the PM, another faction may attempt to impeach the President. Although impeachment is extremely difficult under parliament's rules, Yusuf's popularity is waning even in his most trusted circles.

RANNEBERGER